

BANANAS

Yesterday was the first day of Fairtrade Fortnight.

The next two weeks will see different events and activities up and down the country with a special focus on **bananas** – the nation's favourite fruit.

Fairtrade has been going in the UK since 1994. From small beginnings, over the years it has grown to attract the support of many individuals, businesses, towns, schools and faith groups.

Today, one third of all bananas bought here are Fairtrade. So why the focus on bananas?

Because banana prices are going down whilst the cost for the growers and producers is going up.

According to the Fairtrade Foundation, here, the typical cost of a banana is 11p - compared with 18p ten years ago.

On the other hand, the countries that supply our bananas have seen their costs rising as much as 350%.

In other words, they argue that Fairtrade bananas are no longer fair!

So if you meet someone dressed as a banana at your local shop it's because this year's Fortnight is calling on Supermarkets to keep prices realistic and the Government to protect the trading relationship with poorer countries.

Langside Church (like many other churches) is a Fairtrade church. We have regular stalls and we try and encourage each other to think ethically when we shop.

Jesus said, "*Love your neighbour as you love yourself.*" Those words seem to provide a simple and sensible code to follow.

Yet sometimes in practice, it's not simple. Living this out can be complicated and challenging.

Because what I *want* may clash with what my neighbour *needs*.

It's natural to want to choose the bargain. Why pay more for anything if you can get it cheaper elsewhere?

It's natural to want the best deal for "*us*".

The challenge is – if we want to be part of a fairer world we may have to be prepared to pay a wee bit more so our neighbours can make a decent and sustainable living.

David McLachlan 26 February 2014